

# **Handilift Advisory Committee**

## **Meeting Minutes**

### **November 16, 2011**

The meeting was held in the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room of the Hood Building on S. President Street. Attending today's meeting were: Dr. Scott Crawford, Chairperson; Rev. Sam Gleese, City ADA Coordinator; Ms. Traci Brent, City of Jackson Transit Services/ADA Transportation Accessibility Coordinator; Mr. Sam Tensley, JATRAM General Manager (PTM), Ms. Lee Cole, Mr. Jason Bunch, Mr. Namon Hulitt, Mr. Fred Myers, Attorney Kay Hardage (DRMS), Ms. Sheila O'Flaherty (JATRAM Fixed Route Advisory Committee) and Ms. Larita Smith (JATRAM Handilift Consumer).

The meeting convened at 1:05 p.m.

#### **Old Business:**

- I. Ms. Brent opened by stating that four new paratransit vehicles will be ordered no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>, and that it will take approximately six months to receive them and get them in service. It is the City's intention to order buses with at least four wheelchair securement locations.
- II. The Chairperson asked if there would be adequate personnel to operate the new Handilift buses. Mr. Tensley said yes, because they are in the process of replacing some operators who quit and a few others who are on extended medical leave.
- III. Dr. Crawford noted that as of yesterday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Handilift Appeals Process was **NOT** on the City's website. Ms. Brent said that she would send the information to the City's Constituent Services & Information Department for posting to the JATRAM webpage. This should happen, she said, in the next few days.
- IV. Ms. Cole asked about including the Appeals Process in future mailings of the Handilift Customer Service Guide. The Committee formally adopted the following recommendation: that the current Handilift Customer Service Guide be sent out to all NEW Handilift clients with an addendum that includes the Appeals Process, and be sent to others upon request (or whenever there is a certification denial or suspension, per the consent decree).
- V. The previous recommendation of sending out postcards to all Handilift users asking if they needed a Guide in alternative format was deemed impractical for financial reasons. However, Rev. Gleese said that braille, audio, and large print Customer Guides will be available in perhaps a week to send out to those requesting them.
- VI. Crawford asked about current Handilift capacity, namely, were any new Handilift runs added in FY 2011? Mr. Tensley said that the four new buses were received September 27<sup>th</sup>, but were not available for use until the first week in October, so the answer was negative. However, starting in October, JATRAM is utilizing its "extraboard" operators to fill up to two additional Handilift runs on an "as

needed” basis. Mr. Tensley added that during the next “run pick” in December, additional Handilift runs will be allocated to bus operators, so that, starting January 2012, There will be fourteen weekday shifts (8 Hour Runs), and four Saturday shifts.

**New Business:**

- I. “Santa Express”: Rev. Gleese indicated that Handilift will once again offer extra buses on “Black Friday” (the day after Thanksgiving, 7am to 6pm), and every Saturday (9am – 6pm) until Christmas for those wishing to shop. The destinations will be Wal-Mart on County Line Road, North Park Mall, Metro center Mall, and Target.
- II. Dr. Crawford and Ms. O’Flaherty said that there has been a recent decline in bus operators kneeling the buses as people board and alight. They had been doing better starting in August, but compliance declined notably in October. Mr. Tensley said he would reinforce the need to kneel the buses.
- III. Dr. Crawford asked about the “Secret Rider” program, recommended by Mr. Thatcher of TranSystems. Mr. Tensley indicated that it hasn’t been done in some time, but that they have a new risk manager and that he would speak with people at Jackson State University who may be willing to help.
- IV. Finally, the Chairperson asked about another recommendation of Mr. Thatcher’s: that bus operators refer to people in wheelchairs as just that: “people in wheelchairs”, NOT “Chairs” or “Wheelchairs”. Dr. Crawford noted that it is common practice when operators make radio contact with dispatch (e.g., “I’ve got a chair/wheelchair.”) The committee recommends “people first” language.
- V. Ms. Larita Smith mentioned that she had difficulty getting a ride on Handilift the previous week, having been told that the schedule was full. She also indicated that one of the dispatchers was rude. Mr. Tensley indicated that he has already spoken to Ms. Smith about the matter and that it should not occur again. Mr. Tensley added that there were only four trip refusals for the month of October.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:20pm.

The next meeting of the Handilift Advisory Committee is scheduled for January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1pm, at the Hood Building First Floor Conference Room.

These Minutes were written by Committee Chairperson, Scott M. Crawford, Ph.D.  
These Minutes were approved at the January 18, 2012 meeting of this Committee.